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ON DODD BY CHARLOT

Lamar Dodd is sending a choice of his works, drawings, water colors, and oils, to be shown in Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, and Decatur. The variety of medium matches the variety of subject matter - landscape, figures and still - lifes, but the personality in the paintings, always felt, ties together the variegated offerings. One feels this personality hovering over the many works as does a hen over its chicks, bringing them into the fold of one family. What is the characteristic that makes a picture a "Dodd"? Originality may be obtained in a number of ways; Some painters repeat a technical trick, can be identified by an exaggerated piling of pigment, an obvious and oft-repeated distortion of design. Others stick to one kind of subject matter: Delicate iris reflections on a white vase and a Buddha hovering in front of a rich damask background identify a Pushman. Or one can make the eagle scream for one's native state as have Curry and Benton.

However much Lamar Dodd has become identified with the state of Georgia, and however much fame may have accrued to the state on the national art scene, it is not because Dodd portrays the obvious, what travelers would pick up at first sight as typical Georgian: cotton pickers, gin mills, mule - driven drays or ante - bellum mansions. The artist is not even particularly insistent in dragging onto his canvas the wonderful red soil of which travelers rave and of which a negro myth claims that it is the very soil of which Adam's body was made. It may be that Dodd, with his well-balanced interests, is not overfond of this red soil because, picturesque as it is, he knows its deficiencies for agriculture.

One will find in his work as a whole that cotton pickers and picturesque sights are rather the exception. What he portrays of Georgia is a deeper and more elusive quality, a turn of mind, a design for living, that may seem clanish to outsiders, but is rich in rewards for those born to it; perhaps a compound of tradition and reserve, an XVIIIth Century cast of manners, a musqueteer belief in the innate nobility of amateurism that never allows one to confuse a job with life, however excellent or proficient, or successful one may be at it. (Continued on the next page)

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That such thoughts come to me while I look at Lamar's still-lives and seascapes, proves how completely the work is identified with the man that no story-telling is needed to tell this story. He chooses, in fact, most general subjects, trees, sand and sea and woods that are not particular to this state, this nation or even this continent. And it is not perhaps even those objects that are the subject of his paintings, but more elusive things; the air between the blades of grass rather than the grass itself, the wind over the sea rather than any one wave. Bulk is felt as an intruder in his pictures, even when he tackles quarries and hills, but not so the air between spectator and spectacle, and the space that gathers up to the very horizon and beyond. Elusive, immaterial, invisible things that one would not believe within the range of the plastic arts but rather of music, are at the core of his painted world. It is what differentiates his landscapes from most occidental painting. The sense of space, as the central motive, a shyness at introducing other than minute objects, a sea-shell, blades of grass along its margins, links him rather to Chinese painters that were also lovers of space, and to Occidental masters that remain isolated from the more popular trends of art, such as Turner.

That Dodd can vanquish form is evident in those still-lives and portraits that lend themselves less to the oriental mood than do landscapes. In the drawings, two of hands and one a sea-shell, his most meticulous and competent rendering of details will atone

for those other works that nearsighted people may find of too large a sweep.

What strikes us in the show is that the artist made his choice of works for esthetic reasons only, intent on showing some of his later work and some pictures of unusual tenor, with complete disregard for this identification that the art world makes between him and his native state. Besides a picture of the Athens campus with its chapel, besides Savannah fishermen drying their nets, there are coast scenes from South Carolina, Hollywood mansions from California, views of Cape Cod, etc. But being all painted by Dodd, those pictures of his travels, faithful as they are to the scene, tell also something of Georgia.

The Museum of Fine Arts in Montgomery has as its opening show this year an exhibition of Mr. Dodd's work--twelve oils, four water colors, and fourteen pencil and wash drawings. It is about this exhibition that Mr. Charlot has written the preceding article.

WHAT ABOUT THE AUCTION?

The little Charlots want to know WHY can't they draw on the walls. "Papa does", they say, "So why can't we?"

Everyone had been told by Mr. Payer not to fall into a certain large rat-hole by his garage. Who fell into it?--Mr. Payer! Sincerest sympathies to you, suh. . . . But of course your ankle will be well by the time the Tube is out.

WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE MUSIC
FESTIVAL, THURSDAY AND FRI-
DAY - THIS WEEK!
